

### REMARKS

The present amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action dated June 5, 2002, which set a three-month period for response, making this amendment due by September 5, 2002.

Claims 1 through 9 are pending in this application.

In the Final Office Action, claims 1, 2, 4-7, and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,172,522 to Jares in view of GB 2080920 to Minamidate et al. Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jares in view of Minamidate et al and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,697,456 to Radle et al.

In order to more clearly distinguish the present invention over the cited references, claim 1 has been amended to add that the gripping part has a mounting side facing towards the mounting part. Second, claim 1 includes the feature that the elastic element keeps the gripping part separate from the mounting part so that these two parts do not come into contact with one another. Third, amended claim 1 provides that the safety element is fixed at the mounting side of the gripping part, meaning that the safety element may be fixed somewhere at the mounting side and not only on top of the mounting side. Finally, claim 1 was amended to delete the limitation added in the last amendment, relating to the safety element being movable to avoid transmission of vibrations.

The patent to Jares fails to disclose an elastic element that keeps the gripping part and the mounting part separate so that these two parts do not

contact one another. In the Minamitate patent, the gripping part 6 is directly mounted on the mounting part 7 and is not kept separate by the elastic element so that these two parts do not come into contact with one another.

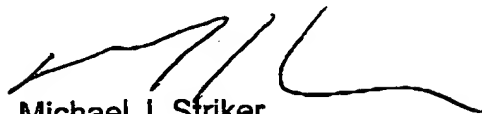
In addition, in the present invention, the safety element and the elastic element are two distinct parts. The Jares reference fails to disclose or show an elastic element and a safety element. In the Minamitate reference, the rod 3 is interpreted as both an elastic element and a safety element. Finally, the safety element in Minamitate is not fixed at the mounting side of the gripping part, but at the opposite side.

Both of the references cited in combination, then, fail to disclose or suggest specific features of amended claim 1. Therefore, the practitioner could not be lead to the present invention by combining the Jares and Minamitate patents. The Applicants therefore respectfully submit that claims 1-9 are patentable over this art of record. The Applicants further request withdrawal of the final rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103 and reconsideration of the application as herein amended.

In light of the foregoing arguments in support of patentability, the Applicants respectfully submit that this application stands in condition for allowance. Action to this end is courteously solicited.

Should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, the undersigned would very much welcome a telephone call in order to discuss appropriate claim language that will place the application into condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MJS', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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